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The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen's Legacy in Music Education

12-2019

Preface

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Citation of this paper:

Allsup, Randall Everett and Benedict, Cathy, "Preface" (2019). *The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen's Legacy in Music Education*. 1.

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/jorgensen/1>

The Road Goes Ever On: Preface

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“I have suggested,” Estelle Jorgensen wrote in her best known book *Transforming Music Education*, “that music educators are often interested in the territory ‘in between’ theoretical types – that is, at their intersection or in their vanishing points. Of particular interest are those cases where teacher meets student, musical form meets function, theory meets practice, one idea meets another, one instructional method meets another, one music meets another, and so on”¹. In-betweenness and one-anotherness; close-by and elsewhere: these are locations, dispositions, an ethics of practice – ways of living that emphasize the profound reward of new beginnings. Such a philosophical stance foregoes the singular in favor of pluralities, dialogue, and chance encounter. Jorgensen, above all, invites us to meet.

In this collection of essays, we invited diverse authors to share how their work intersects with the writing, teaching, and leadership of Estelle Jorgensen. We hoped to

capture the many ways that the music education philosophy community has journeyed with Jorgensen. Sometimes we have travelled with her side-by-side; at other times, she has directed our journey by pointing us in unfamiliar directions. Mayhap, ‘twas a chance reunion at a road’s crossing, a surprise for both of us.

Purple prose? Only for those who have failed to grasp that, like Maxine Greene, Twyla Tharp, Susan Sontag and others, teacher-author Estelle Jorgensen does not write about art without inhabiting her understanding of art. Though analytic by nature, and trained early on as a positivist (long since disavowed), her work broke new ground in the field of music education through a restless insistence on thinking/doing through complexity and dialectic tension. She has brought to our cognitive and developmental models a needed timeout (not expulsion, just an opportunity to cool off) – a chance for the model to meet with the metaphoric and the

spiritual. “Metaphors lead us in a very different direction,” she writes. “Instead of tending towards the one right or best way, the one all-encompassing grand narrative, no matter what it be, thinking about music education metaphorically opens up many possibilities of seeing the work of education in ways that defy reduction to a single universal principle”². Jorgensen’s great achievement was to make life messier for music teachers and music education researchers.

But perhaps, complexity of this sort is hard to appreciate. From the Tanglewood Declaration to the Internet age, three philosophers came to define music education during this transitional era in music education history: Bennett Reimer, David Elliott, and the hero of this book. Since 1970, Reimer’s “music education as aesthetic education” was the institutional face of university-based music education. Elliott’s influential *Music Matters* sought to correct the perceived deficiencies of aesthetic theory to much acclaim. Both writers’ seminal texts were explanatory in tone, complete with directives, charts, and guides for practice. (Reimer’s and Elliott’s books both have chapters that end with philosophical homework questions, the type that incongruously suggests right and wrong answers). In decided contrast, Jorgensen, founding co-chair of the International Society for the Philosophy of Music Education and founder/editor of the international journal *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, always started with questions and ended with more, restlessly eschewing certainties in favor of wonder and

dialogue with the reader. As the first major female author in a male domain, Jorgensen’s focus on becoming made her contributions less easy to summarize and thus more difficult to proliferate. As a consequence, a mismatch emerged between the indisputable impact of Jorgensen’s philosophical/professional work and critical inquiry/implementation of her thinking. This gap – between influence and examination; between gender and historical context – creates an intriguing rationale for the purposes of this book.

Contained within this collection are 21 philosophical essays that focus on themes that have intrigued Jorgensen and inspired multiple authors and teachers over the span of forty years: the transformation of music education in public schools; feminist and LGBTQ voices; mentoring and leadership; the unfinished search for new ways of seeing, hearing, and doing; multiple and intersecting musical identities; the tension between tradition and change; and activist practices in music education. Contributors were challenged to “meet up” with Jorgensen – extending, critiquing, and enriching her body of work so that new lines of inquiry might extend, fracture, and collide. This “new something” is a collection of philosophies, not about Jorgensen’s life and work per se; but theory made actuated by her public accomplishments.

The Road Goes Ever On: Estelle Jorgensen’s Legacy in Music Education is published by Western University, Ontario, Canada, coinciding with a conference in honor of Estelle Jorgensen hosted by Indiana

University, February 2-3, 2020 at Bloomington, Indiana³. The authors in this volume span multiple generations, institutions, locations, and disciplines, and as this collection (and each essay) was designed as open source and freely available on the internet, each essay both stands alone and is linked back at the conclusion of every chapter to a general landing page.

The book is loosely organized into five sections. In Section I, *The Past is Our Future / The Past is Not Our Future*, the authors address Jorgensen's care with both the personal and the professional; underscoring the unwavering mentorship Jorgensen has provided, and her vision for engaging in the process of music education philosophy. Section II, *Action and Quest*, looks at the ways in which metaphor and narrative has played a primary role in framing both music education and personal agency particularly when "the transgressive" in music education now faces modes of rationality that call for and govern market based, hyper-individuality, global discourses. Section III, *Becoming Other Than*, offers thinking connected to Jorgensen's dialectical approach, extends her wondering dispositions toward policy connections all while embracing the liberatory nature of her philosophical writing. Sections IV and V, *A Passage to Elsewhere* and *An Epilogue for the Unfinished*, bring the collection together with a look at the future through the lens of hope and imagination.

By the time Estelle Jorgensen retired from the Jacobs School of Music, Indiana University as Professor Emerita of Music in

2013, she was the author of four acclaimed manuscripts, *Pictures of Music Education*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press (2011); *The Art of Teaching Music*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press (2008); *Transforming Music Education*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press (2003); and *In Search of Music Education*. Urbana-Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press (1997). She has published over one hundred articles, book chapters, and research editorials, and has given keynote presentations around the world. Jorgensen's citations number in the thousands, and she most certainly has more books and articles on the way. But the editors of this collection argue that the most important impact a teacher can make is measured qualitatively, in the unnumbered ways in which an educator like Jorgensen lays the groundwork for the growth of others. Her mentorship includes the fostering of two thriving philosophy research societies: International Society for the Philosophy of Music Education (ISPME) and the US National Association for Music Education special interest research group in philosophy of music education (NAfME's Philosophy Special Research Interest Group-SRIG). She has mentored a generation of doctoral students who hold positions of influence in universities across the world; and of course, her editorship of the *Philosophy of Music Education Review*, which was prefaced by four newsletters (PME), has brought together diverse voices since 1993.

Indeed, Professor Jorgensen is worthy of the title teacher. Her lifetime

commitment to mentoring a new generation of researcher-teachers brings to mind a short poem of gratitude by the poet Robert Bly.

When we stride or stroll across the
frozen lake,
We place our feet where they have never
been.
We walk upon the unwalked. But we are
uneasy.
Who is down there but our old teachers?

Water that once could take no human
weight –
We were students then – holds up our
feet,
And goes on ahead of us for a mile.
Beneath us the teachers, and around us
the stillness⁴

If I have seen further, you might say,
it is because I stand on the shoulders of
giants. That's one way to think of teachers.
But such a sentiment of heroic progress

belies the grace of Jorgensen's mentorship. This poem about "old teachers" has something less grand and more precarious to say. To walk where you have never walked before, to explore a place that is radically different than one season ago (one semester ago?), a place that once could hold no weight – well, this is not a feeling of victory, but what? A mixture of gratitude and terrible awe? Have you met an authentic teacher who did not feel like an imposter? Have you spoken with a teacher who was not scared the first five minutes of every class? If we deserve the name of teacher, it is because of the alchemy of another's mentorship, the same alchemy that turns what was once the waters of passion and confusion into surface ice. Opaque, below us and around us, we feel the waters of our inner life metamorphize, from vapor to crystal, from water to steam. Estelle, you have changed so many of us. This book is dedicated to you.

Thank you,
Randall and Cathy.
December 15, 2019

Notes

1 Jorgensen, Estelle R. (2003). *Transforming Music Education*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. page 119.

2 Jorgensen, Estelle R. (2011). *Pictures of Music Education*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. page 4.

3 13th Annual Jean Sinor Memorial Lecture, February 3, 2020

4 Bly, R. (1999). *Gratitude to Old Teachers*. *Eating the Honey of Words*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.